

## CHAPTER 3

# MOVEMENT

*Movement should be as rapid as the terrain, the mobility of the force, and the enemy situation, will permit.*

FM 100-5, 1986

*One of the strengths of the infantry rifle company, is its ability to move across almost any terrain in any weather conditions. When the rifle company is able to move undetected, it gains an advantage over the enemy force. If detected during movement, the enemy may be able to apply substantial combat power against the company. The ability to gain and or maintain the initiative often depends on undetected movement by the unit. The rifle company depends heavily upon the terrain for protection from the enemy's fires. The CO also protects his company during movement, by ensuring the company is using proper movement formations and techniques, and by applying the movement fundamentals discussed in this chapter.*

### 3-1. FUNDAMENTALS

The CO's estimate of the situation assists him in deciding how to most effectively move his unit. There is no set method for this. The following fundamentals provide guidance for planning effective company movements.

a. **Do Not Confuse Movement With Maneuver.** Maneuver is defined as movement supported by fire to gain a position of advantage over the enemy. At company level, there is considerable overlap between the two. When planning company movements, the CO must ensure the unit is moving in a way that supports a rapid transition to maneuver. Once contact with the enemy is made, squads and platoons receiving effective fire execute the appropriate battle drills, and leaders begin to maneuver their units.

b. **Conduct Reconnaissance.** Reconnaissance should be conducted by all echelons. The enemy situation and the available planning time may limit the unit's reconnaissance, but leaders at every level must aggressively seek information about the terrain and enemy. One effective technique is to send a reconnaissance element forward of the lead platoon. Even if this unit is only 15 minutes ahead of the company, it can still provide valuable information/reaction time for the company.

c. **Effectively Use the Terrain and Weather.** The company should move on covered and concealed routes. Moving during limited visibility provides more concealment, and the enemy may be less alert during these periods. Plan to avoid known danger areas.

d. **Move As Squads and Platoons.** The advantages to moving the company by squads and platoons include:

- Faster movement.
- Better security. A small unit is less likely to be detected because it requires less cover and concealment.

- More dispersion. The dispersion gained by moving the company by squads makes it much more difficult for the enemy to concentrate his fires against the company, especially indirect fires, CAS, and chemical agents. Subordinate units also gain room to maneuver.
- Better OPSEC. It is much more difficult for the enemy to determine what the friendly force is doing if all he has are isolated squad-sized spot reports.

Although the advantages normally outweigh the disadvantages, when planning decentralized movements, the CO should also consider the following:

- Numerous linkups are required to regroup the company.
- In the event of enemy contact, massing combat power to support a hasty attack or disengagement may take longer.
- There may be some squads without radio communications. This problem can be reduced by planning for contingencies and by using all available resources.

e. **Maintain Security During the Movement.** A primary responsibility of the CO is to protect his unit at all times. This is critical during movement because the company is extremely vulnerable to enemy fires. In addition to the fundamentals listed earlier, the CO provides security for the company by applying the following:

- Use the proper movement formation and technique.
- Move as fast as the situation will allow. This may degrade the enemy's ability to detect the unit and the effectiveness of his fires once detected.
- Ensure that subordinate units correctly position security elements to the flanks, front, and rear at a distance that prevents enemy direct fire on the main body. (Normally, the company formation and movement technique provides greater security to the front, it is the flanks and rear that must be secured by these security elements. The company SOP should state who is responsible for providing these security elements.)
- Enforce noise and light discipline.
- Ensure all personnel camouflage themselves and their equipment.

f. **Make Contact With the Smallest Element Possible.** By making contact with a small element, the CO maintains the ability to maneuver with the majority of his combat potential. The soldiers who first receive enemy fires are most likely to become casualties. They also are more likely to be suppressed and fixed by the enemy.

### 3-2. LOCATIONS OF KEY LEADERS AND WEAPONS

The locations for key leaders and weapons depend on the situation, the movement formation and technique, and the organization of the rifle company. This paragraph provides guidance for the CO in deciding where these assets should locate.

a. **The Company Commander.** The CO locates where he can see and control the company. Normally, he positions the CP at his location, but at times he may move separate from the CP. He may take just his company net RATELO and travel with one of his platoons. This allows him to move with a platoon without disrupting their formation. Generally, the CO (with the CP) operates just behind the lead platoon.

b. **The Company Command Post.** The CP consists of the CO, his RATELOs, the FIST HQ, the communications and NBC sergeants, and possibly other personnel and attachments (XO, ISG, or a security element). The company CP is located where it can best support the CO and maintain communications. To maintain communications, the CP

may need to locate away from the CO. In this case, the XO would control the CP (or part of it) and maintain communications with higher or adjacent units while the CO locates where he can best control the company. Although the CP can move independently, it is normally located in the company formation where it is secured by the other platoons and sections.

c. **The Company Fire Support Officer.** The company FSO normally moves with the CO. At times, he may locate elsewhere to control indirect fires or relay calls for fire from the platoon FOs.

d. **The Company Mortars.** The company mortars are located in the formation where they can provide responsive fires in the event of enemy contact. They should be positioned where they gain security from the other units in the company. They normally are not positioned last in the company formation, because they have limited capability to provide security and their soldier's load often makes them the slowest element in the company. Also, when last in movement, their ammunition, carried by the other soldiers in the company, is not readily available. The mortar squads may be attached to platoons. This would allow two platoons the ability to provide indirect fires (of reduced effects) when in overwatch without having to shift the mortar section each time.

e. **The Antiarmor Section.** This section may move as a unit or attach its teams to the platoons. Moving as a section allows the CO to more quickly mass his antiarmor fires. Attaching teams to the platoons provides some antiarmor and thermal capability throughout the company. This also allows alternating overwatch platoons without having to shift the antiarmor section from platoon to platoon.

f. **Other Attachments.** The locations of other attachments will depend on the situation. CS assets, such as engineers or Stinger teams, are positioned where they can best support the company. For example, the engineers may follow the lead platoon where they would be more responsive, and the Stinger team positioned where the terrain best supports engaging enemy aircraft.

g. **Wheeled Vehicles.** Wheeled vehicle attachments, such as TOWs, the mortar platoon, ambulances, or resupply vehicles, present certain problems to the rifle company commander. The terrain that the infantry company normally moves along will not support wheeled vehicles. It may be possible for the company to secure the roads or trails these vehicles will move on by moving through and securing more restrictive terrain on the flanks.

### 3-3. MOVEMENT FORMATIONS

The company uses six basic movement formations; the column, the line, the vee, the wedge, the file, and the echelon, right or left. These formations describe the locations of the company's platoons and sections in relation to each other. They are guides on how to form the company for movement. Each formation aids control, security, and firepower to varying degrees. The best formation to use depends on the—

- Mission.
- Enemy situation.
- Terrain.
- Weather and visibility conditions (ability to control).
- Speed of movement desired.
- Degree of flexibility desired.

a. When moving cross-country, the distance between soldiers and between platoons varies according to the terrain and the situation. Soldiers should constantly observe their sectors for likely enemy positions, and look for cover that can be reached quickly in case of enemy contact.

b. The commander may specify the platoon formations to be used within the company formation. If he does not, each platoon leader selects his platoon's formation. For example, the lead platoon leader may select a formation that permits good observation and massing of fire to the front (vee formation). The second platoon leader may select a formation that permits fast movement to overwatch positions and good flank security (wedge formation). (Squad and platoon movement formations and techniques are discussed in FM 7-8.)

c. When moving in a formation, the company normally guides on the base platoon to ease control. This should be the lead platoon. In the line or the vee formation, the CO must specify which is the base platoon. The other platoons key their speed and direction on the base platoon. This permits quick changes and lets the commander control the movement of the entire company by controlling just the base platoon. The commander normally locates himself within the formation where he can best see and direct the movement of the base platoon. Terrain features may be designated, using the control measures discussed in paragraph 3-5, for the base platoon to guide on.

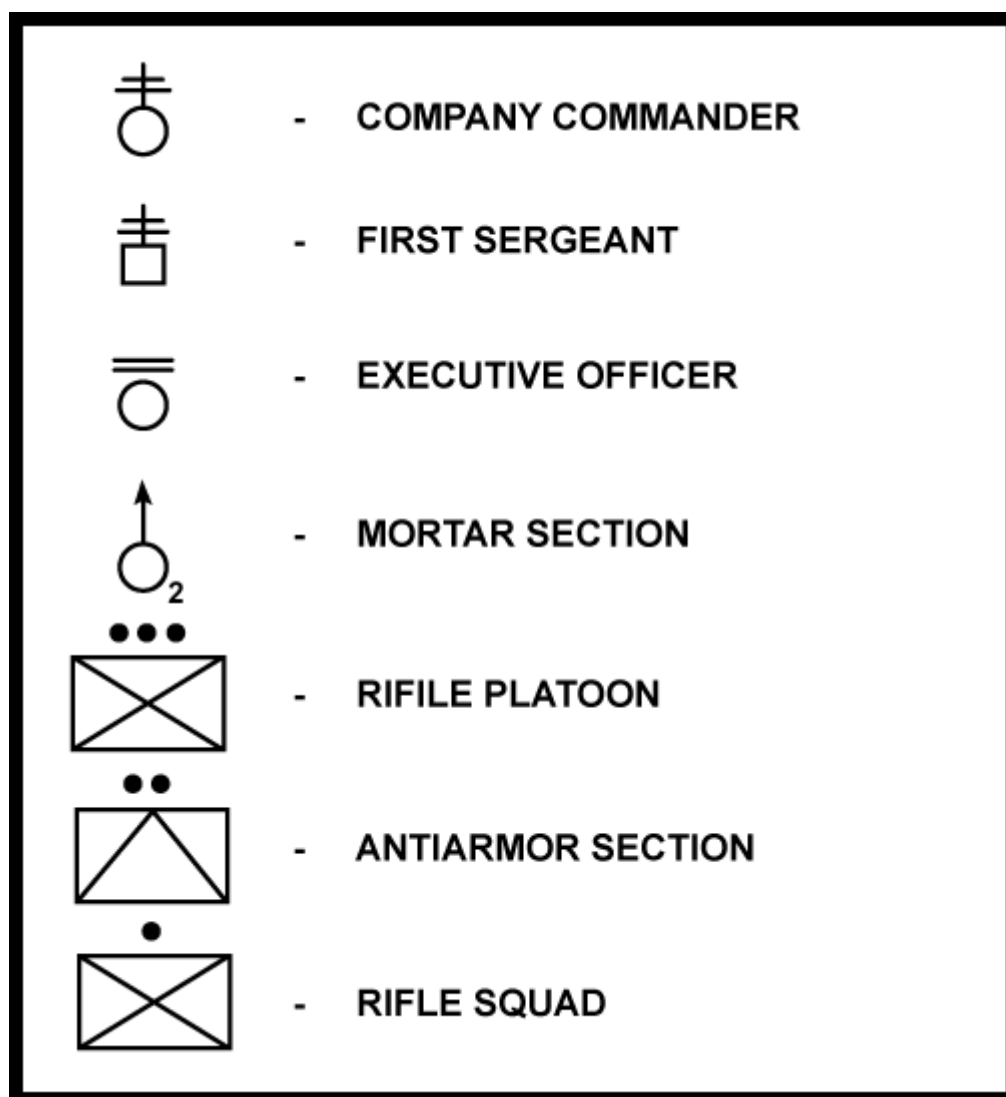
d. One technique used to alert units for possible movement or for units to report their readiness to move is an alert status. With this technique, a system of four readiness conditions is used to reflect the amount of time a unit will have before it is required to move.

- REDCON 1: Be prepared to move immediately.
- REDCON 2: Be prepared to move in 15 minutes.
- REDCON 3: Be prepared to move in 1 hour.
- REDCON 4: Be prepared to move in 2 hours.

Using this technique, a CO can quickly and concisely alert a unit for movement or report its readiness to move.

e. The following is a discussion of the infantry company movement formations. (See Figure 3-1 for a legend of symbols for company personnel and elements.)

(1) *Column*. This movement formation allows the company to make contact with one platoon and maneuver with the two trail platoons. It is a flexible formation, allowing easy transition to other formations. It provides good all-round security and allows fast movement. It provides good dispersion and aids maneuver and control, especially during limited visibility. The company can deliver a limited volume of fire to the front and to the rear, but a high volume to the flanks. Figure 3-2 depicts one version of a company column; it shows the lead platoon in vee formation, the middle platoon in a wedge formation, and the last platoon in column.



**Figure 3-1. Legend of symbols.**

(2) *Company line.* This formation puts three platoons forward along the same direction of movement and provides for the delivery of maximum fire to the front, but less to the flanks. It is the most difficult formation to control. The company commander should designate a base platoon (normally the center platoon) for the other platoons to guide on. Flank and rear security is generally poor but is improved when the flank platoons use echelon formations. Figure 3-3 depicts one example of a company line; it shows the left platoon in echelon left, the center platoon in line, and the right platoon in echelon right.

(3) *Company wedge.* This formation has two platoons in the rear that can overwatch or trail the lead platoon. It provides for immediate fire to the front or the flanks. The commander can make contact with a small element and still maneuver one or two platoons. If the company is hit from the flank, one platoon is free to maneuver. This formation is hard to control, but it allows faster movement than the company vee formation. Figure 3-4 depicts one example of the company wedge; it shows the lead platoon in wedge, the left platoon in column, and the right platoon in echelon right.

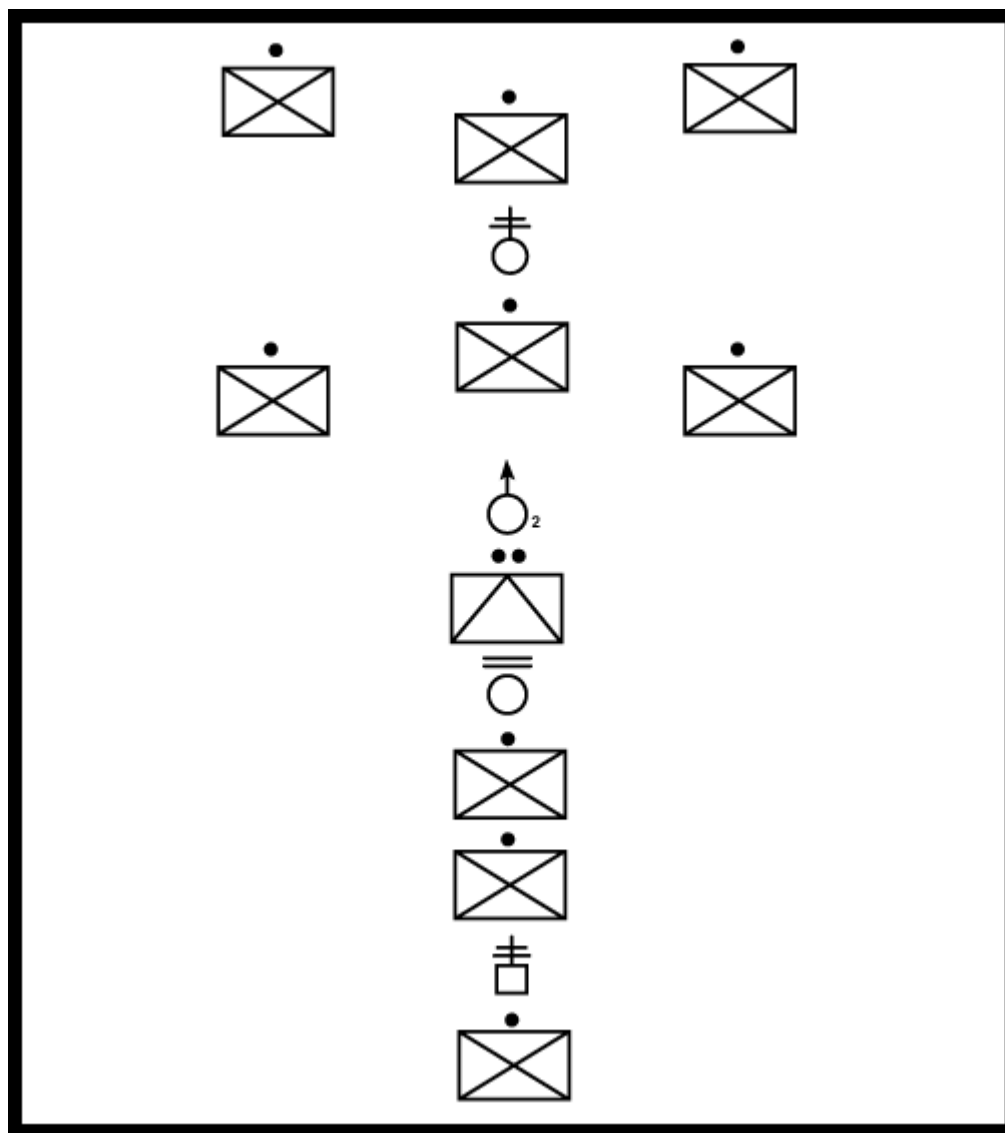
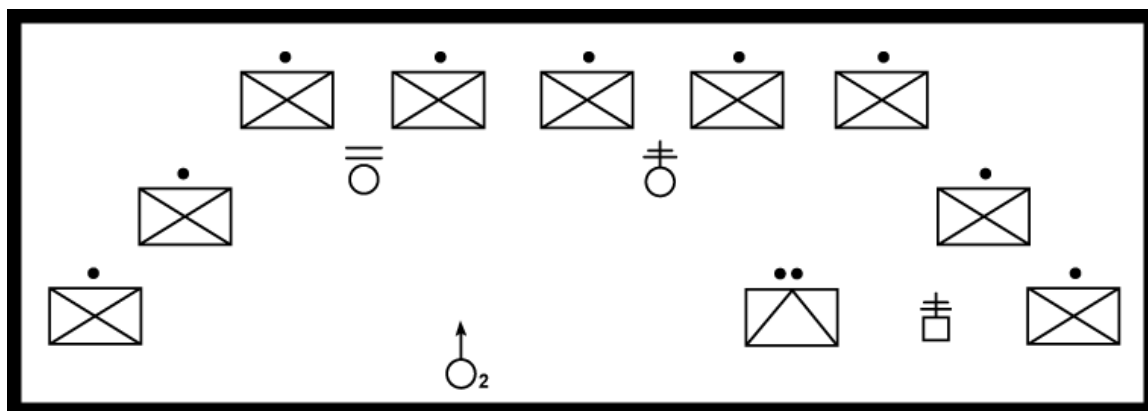
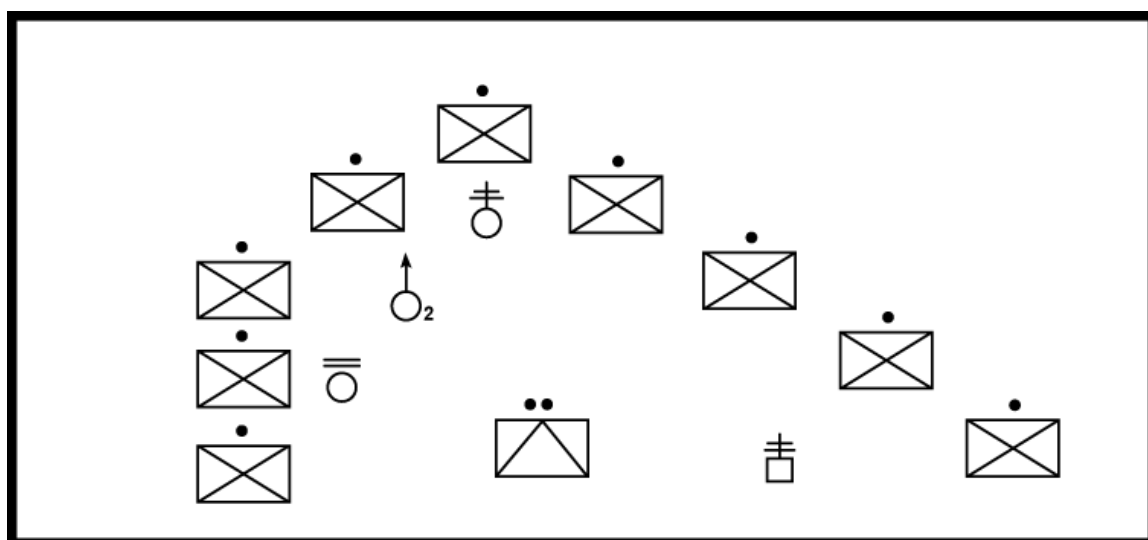


Figure 3-2. Company column.

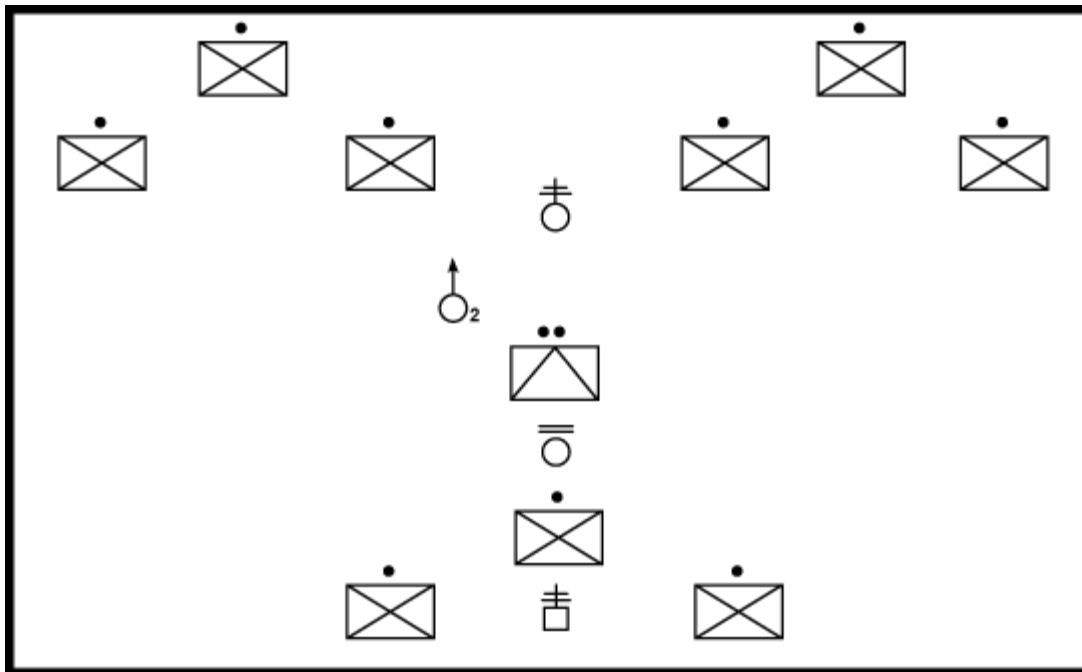


**Figure 3-3. Company line.**



**Figure 3-4. Company wedge.**

(4) *Company vee*. This formation has two platoons forward to provide immediate fire on contact or to flank the enemy. It also has one platoon in the rear, which can either overwatch or trail the others. If the company is hit from either flank, two platoons can provide fire and one is free to maneuver. This formation is hard to control and slows movement. The commander designates one of the forward platoons as the base platoon. Figure 3-5 depicts one example of a company vee; it shows all platoons in wedge.



**Figure 3-5. Company vee.**

(5) *Company file.* This formation is formed by arranging platoon and section files behind the lead element. This is the easiest formation to control. It allows rapid movement in close/restricted terrain or limited visibility and enhances control and concealment. It is also the least secure formation and the hardest from which to maneuver. Figure 3-6 depicts one example of a company file; it shows all units in file.



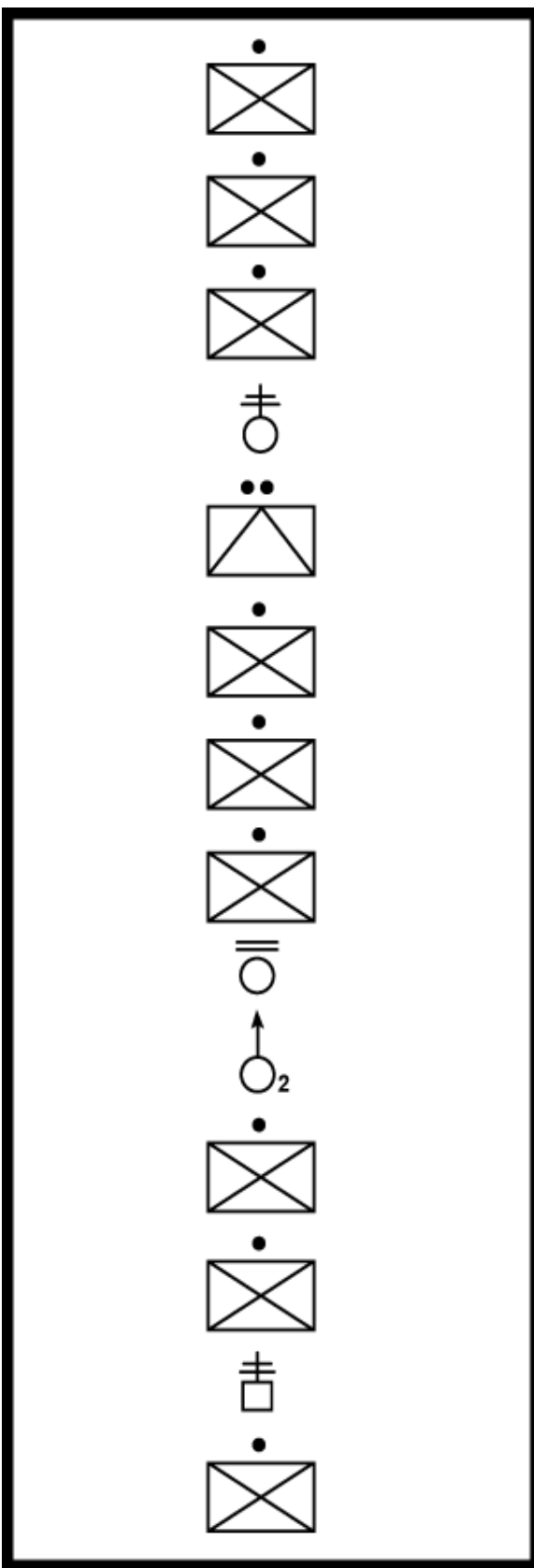


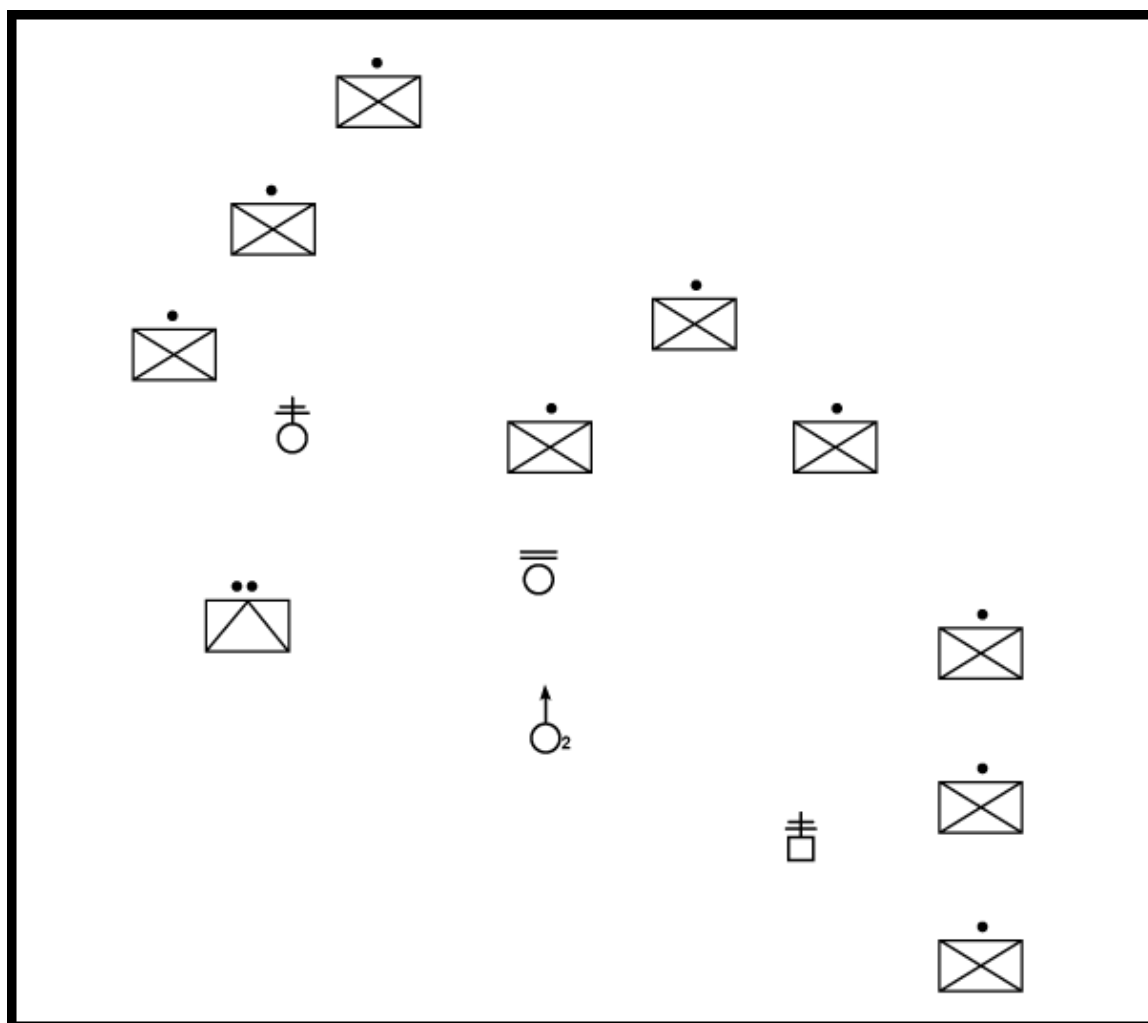
Figure 3-6. Company file.

(a) The commander locates well forward with the lead platoon headquarters or right behind the lead security element. This increases the commander's control by being in position to make critical decisions. The CP can be placed farther back (behind the lead platoon) to avoid interfering with the lead platoon's movement and to aid communications with other elements.

(b) The XO or 1SG is placed last, or nearly last, in the company file to provide leadership and to prevent breaks in contact within the file.

(c) The company file is vulnerable to breaks in contact and should only be used when necessary and for short periods of time. A company of 120 men will stretch out over 600 meters in a company file with a pass time of more than 20 minutes.

(6) *Echelon right or left.* This formation is used if the situation is vague and enemy contact to the front or on one of the flanks is likely. Normally, an obstacle or another friendly unit exists on the flank of the company opposite the echeloned flank. This prevents enemy contact on that side. This formation provides a good volume of fire and protection to the echeloned flank, but less to the opposite flank. Figure 3-7 depicts one example of the echelon right formation; it shows the lead platoon in echelon left, the middle platoon in wedge, and the last platoon in column.



**Figure 3-7. Echelon right.**

(7) *Formation selection.* The CO selects the formation that provides the proper control, security, and speed. Table 3-1 provides a comparison of the six movement formations.

FORMATION	SECURITY	FIRES	CONTROL	SPEED
COLUMN	GOOD DISPERSION	GOOD TO FRONT & REAR	EASY TO CONTROL	FAST
	GOOD 360° SECURITY	EXCELLENT TO THE FLANKS	FLEXIBLE FORMATION	
LINE	EXCELLENT TO THE FRONT	EXCELLENT TO THE FRONT	DIFFICULT TO CONTROL	SLOW
	POOR TO THE FLANK & REAR	POOR TO THE FLANK & REAR	INFLEXIBLE FORMATION	
WEDGE	GOOD 360° SECURITY	GOOD TO THE FRONT & FLANKS	LESS DIFFICULT THAN THE LINE  FLEXIBLE FORMATION	FASTER THAN THE LINE
VEE	BETTER TO THE FRONT	VERY GOOD TO THE FRONT	VERY DIFFICULT	SLOW
FILE	LEAST SECURE	POOR	EASY TO CONTROL	FAST
	EFFECTIVE USE OF CONCEALMENT			
ECHELON	GOOD TO THE ECHELONED FLANK & FRONT	GOOD TO THE ECHELONED FLANK & FRONT	DIFFICULT	SLOW

Table 3-1. Formation comparison chart.

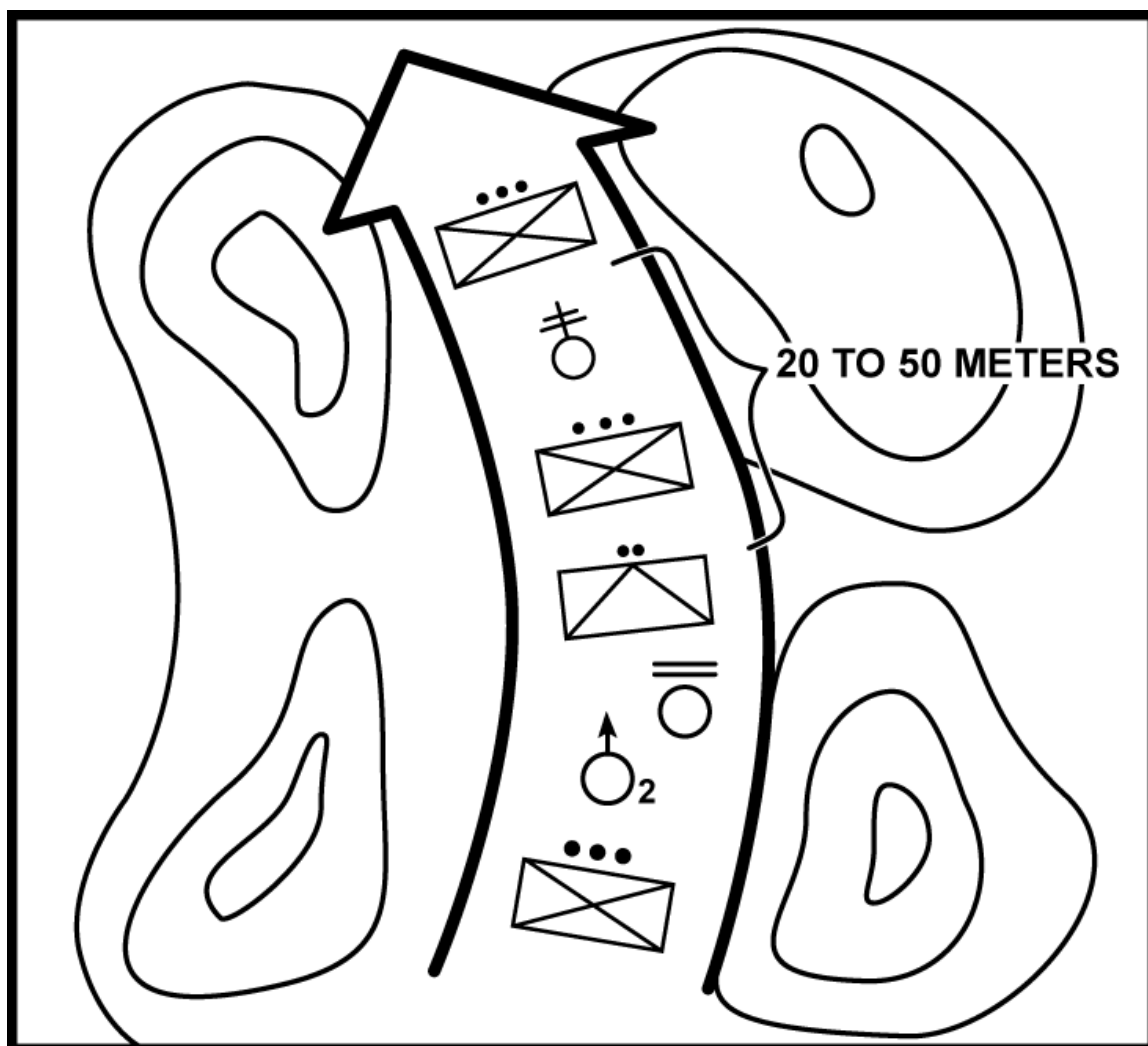
### 3-4. MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES

There are three techniques for moving when not in contact. The commander decides which one to use based on the likelihood of enemy contact, the need for speed, and the terrain and visibility. Movement techniques are not fixed formations. The distances between the soldiers and the units vary based on the mission, enemy, terrain, visibility, and any other factor that affects control. The three movement techniques are traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch.

a. **Traveling.** This technique is used when speed is important and enemy contact is not likely (Figure 3-8). The company moves in a company column with 20 to 50 meters between platoons. The distance depends on the visibility afforded by terrain, weather, and light. All six company formations are effective when using the traveling technique.

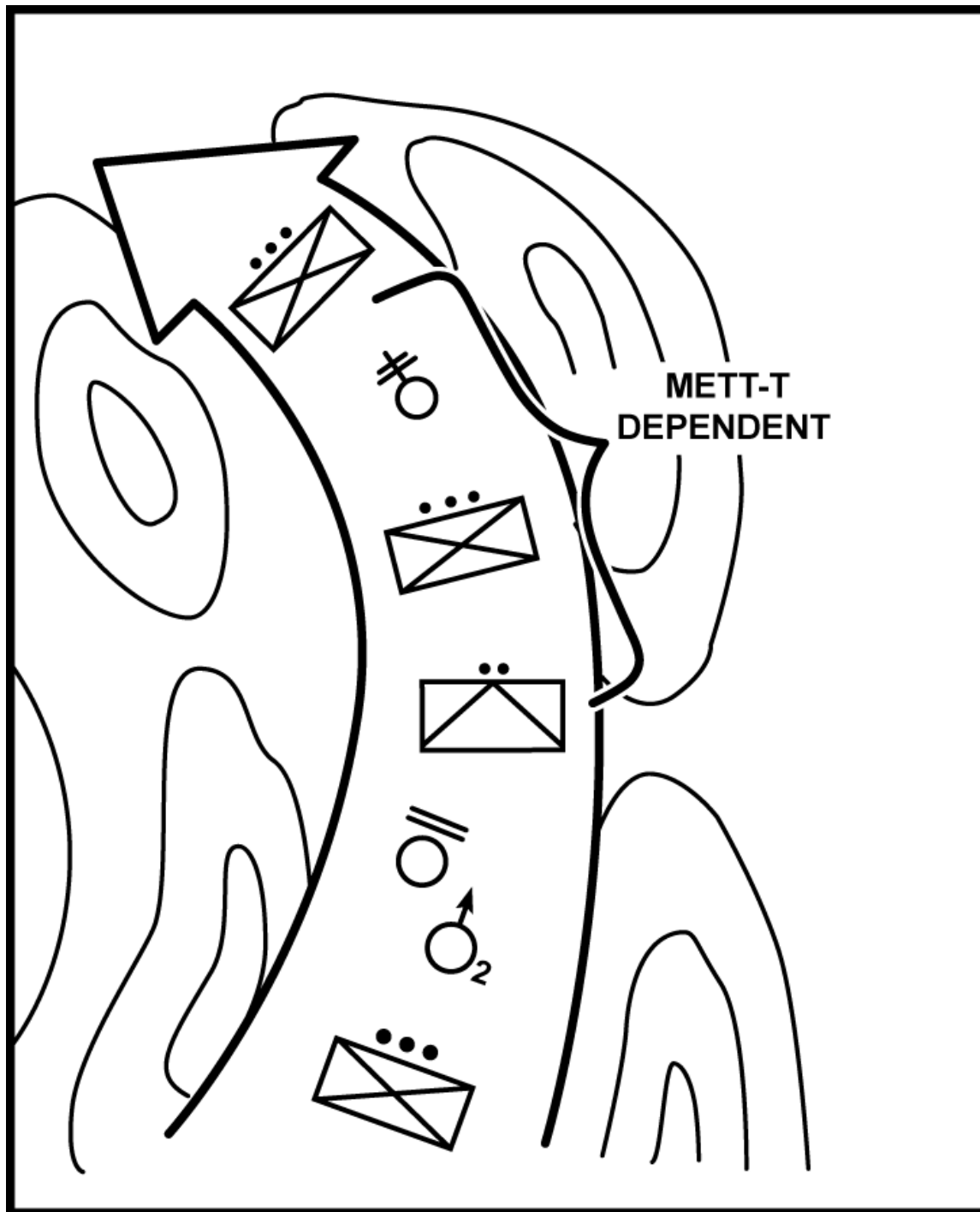
(1) The commander usually follows the base platoon to ease navigation and control. This lets him see the route and direct the base platoon.

(2) All platoons use traveling. Adequate distance is kept between squads and between soldiers to maintain dispersion in case of enemy contact.



**Figure 3-8. Traveling.**

b. **Traveling Overwatch.** This technique is used when enemy contact is possible, but speed is important (Figure 3-9). The column and wedge are effective formations when using this technique of movement.



**Figure 3-9. Traveling overwatch.**

(1) The distance between the lead platoon and the trailing platoon is not fixed. The trailing platoons stay far enough behind the lead platoon to avoid fire directed at the lead platoon, but close enough so they can provide fire support or maneuver when the lead platoon makes contact.

(2) The lead platoon normally uses traveling overwatch while the other platoons use traveling and key their movement on the trail squad of the platoon they follow. However, the company commander may have the lead platoon use bounding overwatch.

c. **Bounding Overwatch.** This technique is used when enemy contact is expected (Figure 3-10). It is the most secure, but the slowest movement technique. Part of the company—the overwatch element—occupies a covered and concealed position with good observation and fields of fire. Another part of the company—the bounding element—moves forward covered by the overwatch element. All movement is keyed to the next position from which the next bounding element will be overwatched. The bounding element never moves beyond the range where it can be supported by the weapons in the overwatch element. When using the alternate method, the roles of bounding and overwatching are changed after each bound. When using the successive method, the same platoon conducts each bound after the overwatch platoon moves forward to the next overwatch position.

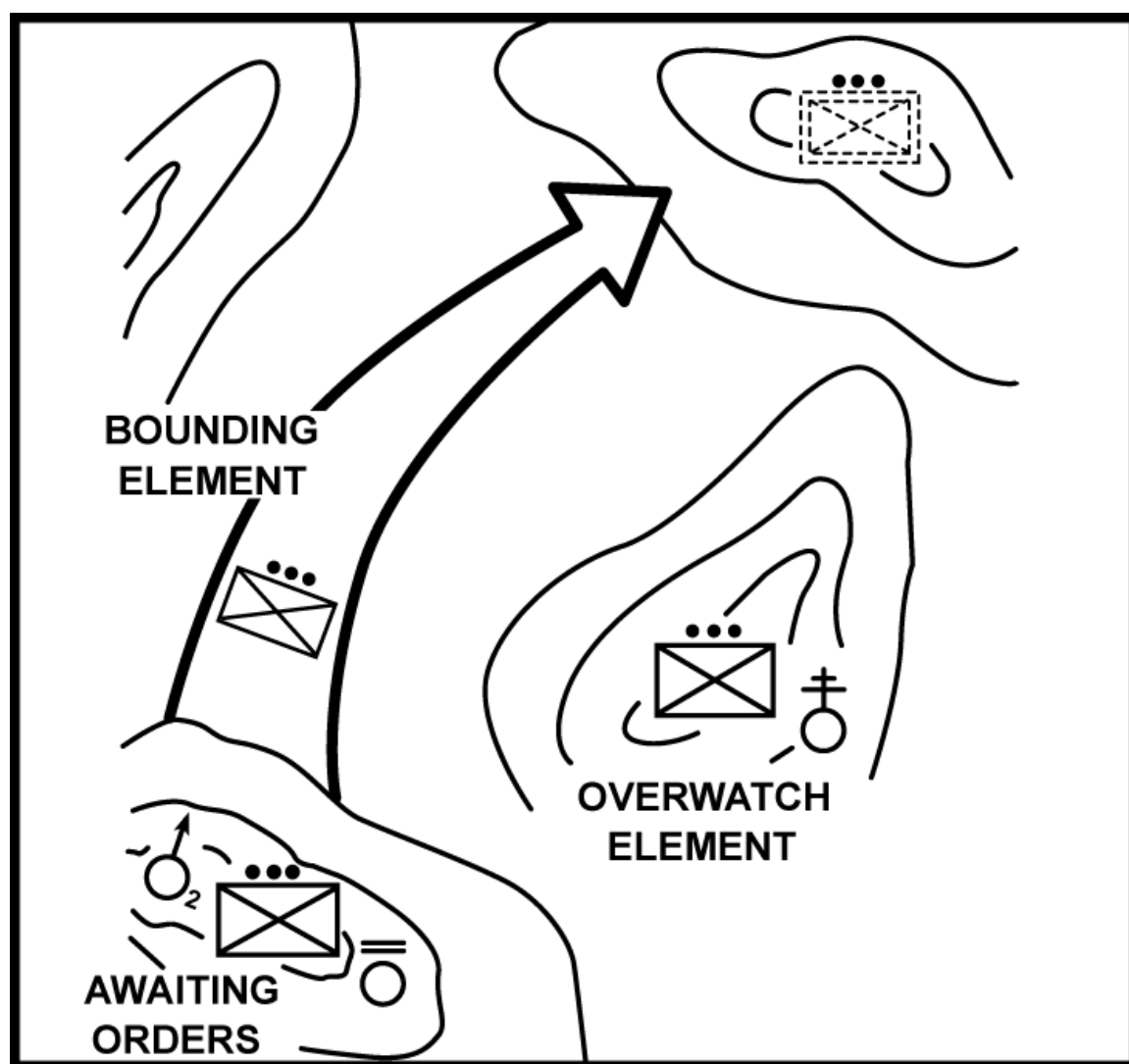


Figure 3-10. Bounding overwatch.

(1) The bounding element, normally a platoon, moves on a covered and concealed route to a position designated by the company commander. It uses either traveling overwatch or bounding overwatch. If the commander can see the entire route of the bounding platoon, he may specify which platoon movement technique to use. If the commander does not select the technique, the platoon leader does. When the platoon reaches its new position, it deploys to overwatch the movement of the rest of the company. Once in position, it remains there while another platoon bounds ahead to the next forward position (alternate method). When deciding where to bound, the commander looks for a position that has cover, concealment, and good observation and fields of fire.

(2) The overwatch element is usually one platoon and the 60-mm mortar section positioned to support the bounding element if it makes contact. Any remaining platoons remain ready and await orders to maneuver or support the bounding element by fire. The company commander normally stays with the overwatch element. The company may alternate platoons as the overwatch and bounding element or reposition the same overwatch element before each bound.

(3) Before a bound, the commander tells the platoon leaders--

- The position of the overwatch element.
- The location of the next overwatch position.
- The route of the bounding element.
- The actions on contact.
- The planned sequence of action.
- How the next order will be given.

### 3-5. CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Using the proper formation and movement technique assists the CO's control of the company. Additional control measures are often required. The following techniques may help in controlling company movements.

a. **Graphics.** Normally, the battalion assigns graphic control measures to integrate the company's movement into the battalion's movement or scheme of maneuver. The CO may need to establish other control measures to control his units. The CO ensures that each graphic control measure can be easily located on the terrain. These may include boundaries, routes, checkpoints, release points, and TRPs on likely enemy positions, to control direct fires.

b. **Reconnaissance.** Prior reconnaissance will aid control during movement. It will provide the CO a better idea of where movement is more difficult and where graphic control measures are needed. It should be conducted by all leaders.

c. **Guides.** Guides who have already seen the terrain are the best way to provide control. When it is not possible to have guides for the entire movement, have them reconnoiter the difficult areas and guide the company through them.

d. **Navigational Aids.** Every leader should use his compass and a pace man for all moves. Select routes that allow leaders to use prominent terrain to stay oriented.

e. **Limited Visibility Movements.** The control measures already listed are the best way to provide control for moving during limited visibility. However, the following measures will provide extra control during these periods.

(1) *Use night vision devices.* Every soldier does not have to use NVDs to move effectively. If the soldiers providing front, flank, and rear security use them, the entire



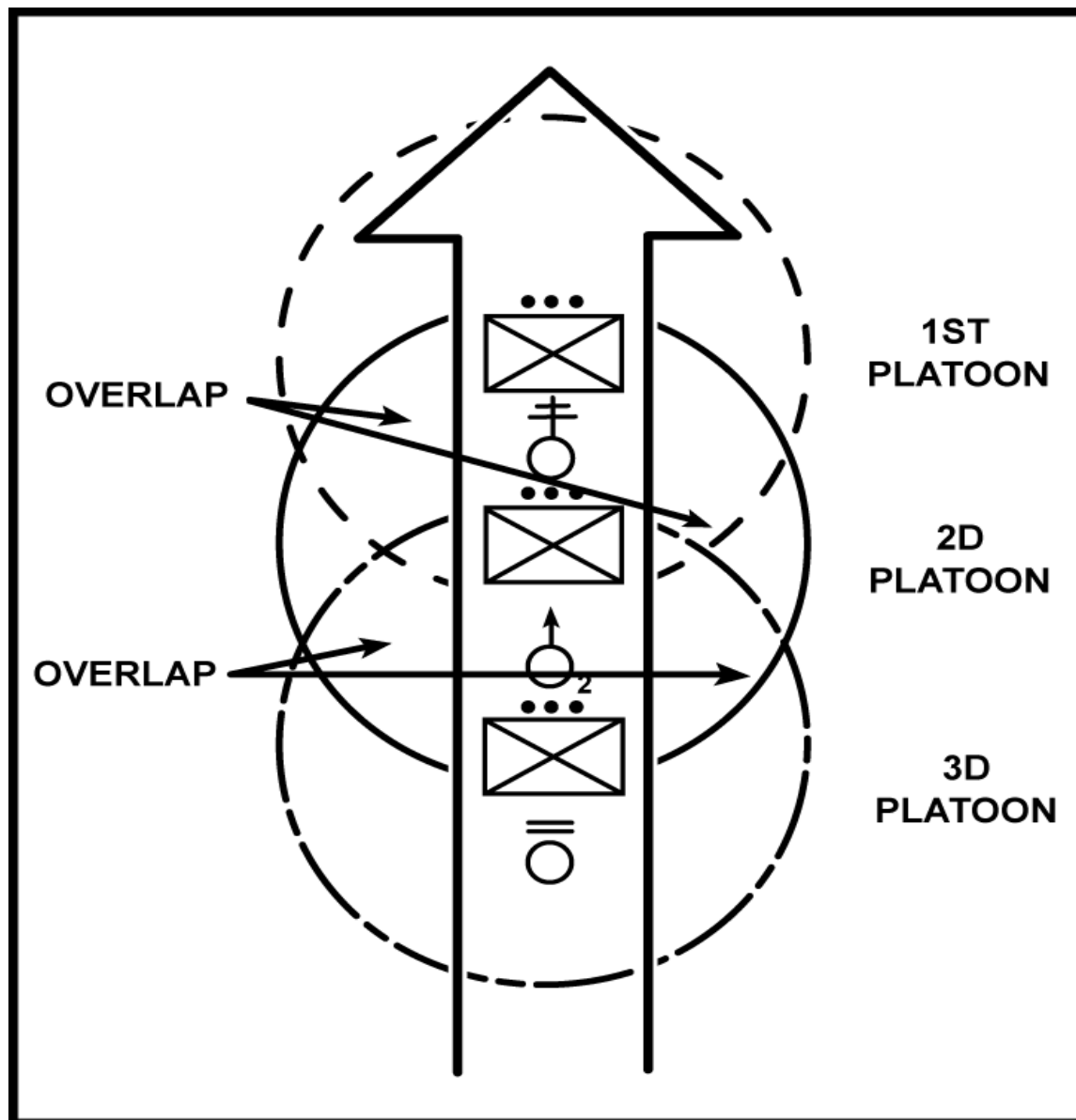
unit can move faster. These soldiers should be rotated to maintain effectiveness. Key leaders throughout the formation should also use them. If not being used, all NVDs should be accessible for use in the event of contact.

(2) *Reduce the interval between soldiers and units.* Closing up the formation allows the use of arm-and-hand signals and reduces the chance of breaks in contact. However, leaders should try to maintain the most dispersion possible at all times. Well-trained units should be able to operate at night as they do during the day.

(3) *Use other measures.* These include using luminous tape on the back of the helmets, slowing the speed of movement, using land line for either communications or to guide units, and moving leaders closer to the front.

### **3-6. SECURITY DURING MOVEMENT**

During movement, each platoon is responsible for a sector, depending on its position in the formation. Also, each fire team and squad within the platoons is given a sector, so the company has all-round security (Figure 3-11).



**Figure 3-11. All-round security.**

a. During short halts, soldiers spread out and assume prone positions behind cover. They watch the same sectors that were assigned while moving. Leaders set up OPs, machine guns, and antiarmor weapons on likely enemy approaches into the position. Soldiers remain alert and speak (quietly) only when necessary. They keep movement to a minimum. Soldiers with night vision devices scan areas where the enemy may be concealed during limited visibility.

b. During long halts, the company sets up a perimeter defense (Chapter 5). The commander chooses the most defensible terrain (with good cover and concealment). The company SOP should address the actions required during long halts.

c. For additional security, small ambush teams may be concealed and remain in position after a short halt. Ideally, these teams should be provided by the platoon in the center of the company formation. These teams remain in position to ambush any enemy

following the company. The linkup of these teams must be coordinated and understood by all.

d. Before occupying a static position (ORP, patrol base, or AA), the CO should ensure that the enemy is unaware of his location. In addition to using the ambush teams, the CO may also conceal security teams in or near the tentative static position as the company passes by. The company continues movement, preferably until darkness, and then circles back to link up with the security teams, who have reconnoitered the position, and guide the company in.

### **3-7. MOVEMENT AS PART OF A BATTALION**

The company often moves as part of the battalion. The battalion commander assigns the company a position within the battalion formation. The company commander uses the movement technique and movement formation that best suits the likelihood of enemy contact and the unit mission. Regardless of the company's position within the battalion formation, it must be ready to make contact or to support the other companies by fire alone or by maneuver. (See FM 7-20.)